

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 2, 2005

The Honorable Charles Taylor
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
B308 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Taylor:

As you consider funding for the Fiscal Year 2006 Department of Interior and related agencies budgets, we would like to highlight the need to fully fund the Payment-in-Lieu-of-Taxes program (PILT).

As you know, PILT compensates more than 1,900 counties in 49 states and territories for property taxes they cannot collect on tax-exempt federal lands located within their boundaries. This program enables local communities to provide funding for basic government services such as schools, roads, and public safety programs that local tax revenue would usually pay for.

We believe fully funding PILT can be accomplished by finding savings in the combined federal land acquisition money in the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) account for both the Department of Interior and the U.S. Forest Service. We also believe savings can be found by significantly reducing EPA discretionary grants, a program that is widely known to be fraught with waste and abuse.

Shifting these funds would be more than enough to raise PILT funding from the \$200 million in the President's Fiscal Year 2006 budget to the fully authorized level. The remaining savings in federal land acquisition money and EPA discretionary grants could be used to reduce overall discretionary spending, thus contributing to deficit reduction.

Your favorable consideration of this request, which is so important to western and rural counties, would be greatly appreciated.

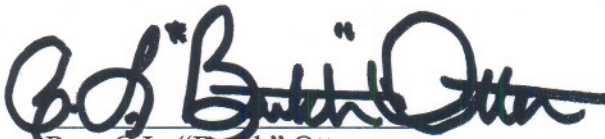
Sincerely,



Rep. Chris Cannon



Rep. Stevan Pearce



Rep. C.L. "Butch" Otter



Rep. Rob Bishop

Wally Herger
Rep. Wally Herger

Joel Hefley
Rep. Joel Hefley

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